

Congress of the United States

House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-1806

September 28, 2017

The Honorable E. Scott Pruitt
Administrator
Office of the Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Mail code: 1101A
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

Dear Administrator Pruitt,

I am writing to express concern about the status of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)'s draft Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) assessment of formaldehyde. The National Academy of Sciences harshly criticized the methodology that the EPA used to identify, evaluate and integrate the large and multi-disciplinary body of scientific studies related to the potential carcinogenicity of formaldehyde. Since 2011, the Agency has been working to revise the 2010 draft formaldehyde IRIS assessment in response to numerous substantive recommendations made by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS).

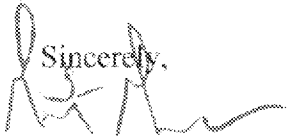
The Agency should produce regulation that protects human health from the dangers of toxic chemicals, and it should ensure that those regulatory requirements are grounded in a thorough and objective review of all the relevant scientific evidence and economic impact. I recently had the opportunity to tour one of the largest formaldehyde manufacturing plants in the country, which is located in my state. It was a reminder of the influence the facility has on the surrounding community, in addition to the many building and construction and automotive applications of this chemical.

It is my understanding that the University of North Carolina (UNC) is hosting an important scientific workshop in October, focused on a discussion of several compelling new scientific studies and new analyses of existing studies, which may have called into question the validity of the Agency's findings. A scientifically flawed, but influential, IRIS assessment will have a devastating economic impact. Furthermore, without a clear understand of the health risks associated with formaldehyde we could potentially expose the surrounding communities to even greater health risks.

For these reasons, I am respectfully requesting that you commit to withholding any further action on the development of the draft IRIS assessment of formaldehyde until the findings from the upcoming science workshop at UNC are fully considered and those findings are appropriately incorporated. It is my hope the deliberations of this important workshop will help inform the Agency on how to appropriately integrate the best available human and animal data to draw conclusions about potential cancer risks.

Before the risk values embedded in the Agency's assessment are used in regulatory decision making, I encourage the Agency to ensure that the regulations governing the manufacturing of formaldehyde are grounded in sound science. To me, the health and safety of the community is a paramount concern. Acting without the best or accurate science will leave a devastating impression on the American people that the Agency cannot take lightly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Garret Graves', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Garret Graves
Member of Congress